

## **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
**DATE:** THURSDAY, 12 JULY 2012  
**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING  
**SUBJECT:** SCHOOL MODERNISATION

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform members of the progress relating to the School Modernisation Strategy.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 The Council approved the School Modernisation Strategy in October 2009, and progress has been made in driving forward various elements of the Strategy. Amongst these is the progress made with the amalgamation of Infant and junior schools, consultations on the rationalisation of surplus places and the improvements to the learning environments through various capital schemes, including the reduction in accommodation in mobile classrooms.
- 2.02 In their 2009 report on the strategic management of education in Flintshire, Estyn identified tackling school modernisation as a key recommendation. This recommendation was made again in the latest Estyn report on the quality of local authority education services in October 2011. In addition, Estyn has recently produced a national report identifying key issues relating to local authorities' responsibilities to manage the supply of school places.
- 2.03 The Flintshire School Modernisation Strategy contains a number of criteria for the review of schools including the percentage of surplus places. It has been identified that a significant proportion of surplus places in the Secondary sector are associated with three schools. These three schools account for 65% of the surpluses in secondary schools. The reduction of surplus places in schools is now a priority of the Welsh Government and Local Authorities have had to return statements relating to the management of surplus places with the Government. The three secondary schools having significant surplus places of over 25% are: -

	<b>No. of Surplus Places (PLASC Jan 2012)</b>	<b>% Surplus</b>	<b>Annual cost of surplus places (£510 per place)</b>
Elfed High School Buckley	393	38	200,430
Holywell High School	453	43	231,030
John Summers High School	181	32	92,310
<b>Total</b>	<b>1027</b>	<b>37.7%</b>	<b>£523,770</b>

*Cost based on Estyn report 'How do Surplus Places affect the resources available for expenditure on improving outcomes for pupils?' (May 2012).*

Approval was given by the Council in December, 2011 for officers to begin a series of consultations with relevant groups including school staff, governors, pupils, young people and parents.

These consultations commenced at the end of February, and responses were collated during May and reported to Members in June.

- 2.04 The consultation process was a combination of:
- public meetings for parents and students both for individual schools and for schools consortia;
  - private meetings for teachers and school based employees;
  - private meetings for governing bodies;
  - special in-school consultation events for students and pupils;
  - an open invitation for responses through published documents, the Council website and the local media.

#### 2.05 **RHES Y CAE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Due to falling numbers of pupils at Rhes y Cae Primary School, Cabinet members discussed options relating to the future of the school. This is in accordance with the adopted Flintshire School Modernisation Strategy.

A period of consultations is underway with staff, parents and governors. A future report will be made to Cabinet Members relating to responses to the consultations. If this is progressed the statutory stage of publication of proposals will be made in the Autumn term.

#### **PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF HAWARDEN INFANT SCHOOL AND RECTOR DREW JUNIOR SCHOOL.**

Following the retirement of the Headteacher at Rector Drew Junior School, Governors of both schools and representatives of the St Asaph Diocese have discussed the option to amalgamate and form a

new through Primary School under the leadership of one Headteacher and Governing Body. This is in accordance with the agreed policy to amalgamate Infant and Junior Schools whenever appropriate.

The report seeks the approval of Cabinet for a period of consultation with staff, parents and governors of both schools.

### **SHOTTON SCHOOLS**

As part of the £6.5m investment in a new primary school building in Shotton, consultations will commence in a new academic year setting out the formal process for establishing a through primary school to replace both the existing Shotton Infant School and Taliesin Juniors School. Governors have been supportive of the proposal, and staff have been involved in the design of the new school building. Formal approval has been sought for a period of consultations about the amalgamation process with staff, parents and governors of the two schools. A report on the responses to consultations will then be submitted to members of the Cabinet before the statutory process is commenced.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

Initial responses to the Secondary School Area Review consultations have been submitted to the Cabinet and are available for Member and public scrutiny. A summary of the responses is as follows: -

#### **Holywell**

An option to bring together local infant and junior schools as a new purpose built primary school co-located with the High School is an emerging preference for this area review. This would provide better continuity for learners throughout the full Primary School age range. Key consultation responses identify that Holywell also has a "once in a generation" opportunity to develop a new secondary school to serve local communities. The challenge remains over how to meet the expectations of Welsh Government to transform sixth form education for learners from the area.

#### **Deeside**

There is a high level of public opposition to amalgamation of John Summers High School with Connah's Quay High School. Consultees have presented a range of practical challenges and difficulties that make such an option difficult to support. There is strong interest in the creation of new Sixth Form centre at Connah's Quay to benefit learners from Deeside, for which there is funding available from the Welsh Government. There is also a creative option put forward by John Summers' High School Governors to work more closely with

local primary school provision in a new community 3-16 arrangement. These options are the emerging preference for this area review.

### **Buckley, Mynydd Isa and Mold**

Governors at Buckley's Elfed High School have requested reconsideration of options to federate or amalgamate with Mynydd Isa's Argoed High School; the views of the governors of Argoed have not changed since last year. The governors at Argoed High School are not supportive of either federation or amalgamation with Elfed High School. The views expressed in first community consultation in 2011 and the continuing view of the Argoed High School Governing Body represent major obstacles to pursuing such an option. Further consideration needs to be given to the options for secondary provision in the Buckley area.

There is a positive vision to develop and enhance Westwood Primary School on its current site together with a willingness to consider possible relocation of the Westwood Centre. There is an emerging preference for this option.

Responses to consultations on the preferred option to close Rhes y Cae and the proposed amalgamations at Hawarden and Shotton will be reported when available.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the contents of this report.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None as a result of this report.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

None as a result of this report.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

None as a result of this report.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

None as a result of this report.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

None as a result of this report but issues will be discussed with individual members of teaching and support staff in the relevant

schools.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

As per guidance from Welsh Government.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

Area Review of Secondary Schools.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

None.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Report to Executive School Modernisation Strategy – October 2009  
Report to Cabinet School Modernisation Responses to Consultation  
– June 2012

Report to Cabinet Amalgamation of Shotton Infants and Taliesin  
Junior School – June 2012

Report to Cabinet Amalgamation of Hawarden Infants and Rector  
Drew Aided Junior School – June 2012

Report to Cabinet Review of Ysgol Rhes y Cae – June 2012

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